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**NO 14
JULY
1984**



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The Entity

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Bad Moon Rising

NIGHT RAVEN
Pathology

SHOWCASE UPDATE
Disenchantment



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MWOM contents

Editor Chris Gill

Design John Tognlinson

Production Tim Hampson
and Alison Gill

Production Jeannette
Assistant Sweetland

Number 14 July 1984

ATTENTION ALL fantasy fans! Stand by your dictionaries for this month's Showcase. Remember what your mum told you would happen if you read too many comics? And talking of Showcase, as we dearly love to do, in the second of our periodic updates on the work of previous exhibitors, Simon Jacobs' super-halitosis-powered little green monster begins to acquire some keen business sense in Disenchantment part II.

If you're looking for anti-heroes, they don't come very much antier than that seedy, sibilant wraith, Night Raven. And finally, we open a new chapter on the life of Blighty's number one pin-up, Captain Britain! So read on...



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MARCH 18TH 1984

THE FULL MOON'S GENTLE LIGHT WASHES THE ROOFTOPS LIKE SILVER RAIN, SILHOUETTING A LONE FIGURE AGAINST LONDON'S GLITTERING SKYLINE.

CAPTAIN BRITAIN

BAD MOON RISING

CO-CREATORS - ALAN DAVIS/STEVE CRADDOCK
EDITOR - CHRIS GILL

HE HAS TRAVELLED THE COSMOS, HELPED SAVE THE UNIVERSE AND SEEN THINGS WE CAN ONLY DREAM OF. HE IS MORE THAN A MAN, HE IS A HERO...

"IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE JUST HOW PEACEFUL THINGS HAVE BEEN."

"SIX MONTHS AGO I FELT I WAS BEING DRIVEN MAD... SLAYMASTER, SATURNINE, THE SPECIAL EXECUTIVE, JASPERS... AND THE FURY. SO MUCH HAS HAPPENED IN ONE SHORT YEAR."

"WELL, ALMOST EVERYONE... BETSY REMEMBERS."

"POOR BETSY, SHE STILL HASN'T FULLY RECOVERED FROM THE PSYCHIC SHOCK SHE FELT AS TOM LENNOX DIED."

"EVERYTHING HAS RETURNED TO NORMAL. JUST AS ROMA SAID, THE NATURAL ORDER OF THINGS WOULD NOT TOLERATE THE JASPERS WARP. REALITY IS REPAIRING ITSELF."

"BUT NOW, NOW IT ALL SEEMS A LIFETIME AWAY."

"EVERYONE HAS FORGOTTEN THE NIGHTMARE. IT'S LIKE AN EPIDEMIC OF AMNESIA."

"AND CAPTAIN UK, I HAVEN'T HEARD FROM LINDA SINCE WE ARRIVED BACK ON EARTH. SHE MUST BE AS BUSY AS I AM, ORGANISING HER LIFE, TRYING TO MAKE SOME SENSE OF IT ALL."

"FORTUNATELY, THE CAVERN COMPUTER HAS RECOVERED FROM THE FURY'S PSIONIC DRAIN. I'LL NEED ITS HELP TO GET THE ESTATE IN ORDER."

"BETSY AND ALISON WILL WANT TO STAY THERE AFTER THEIR RETREAT WITH VICTORIA BENTLEY."

"IT'S NO GOOD... I THOUGHT A BREAK FROM THE MANOR MIGHT CLEAR MY HEAD, BUT THERE'S NO GETTING AWAY FROM IT..."

"BUT HOW AM I GOING TO EXPLAIN THE MANOR'S RE-APPEARANCE WHEN I DROP THE HOLOGRAPHIC DEFENCE FIELD? AND EMMA?"

"WHAT AM I GOING TO DO ABOUT EMMA? A CHAR LADY WHO'S LOST SEVEN YEARS OF HER LIFE SERVING AN INVISIBLE COMPUTERISED HOUSE?..."



"...I'VE GOT PROBLEMS."

PROBLEMS.

SIDNEY CRUMB HAS PROBLEMS.

PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM: HIS REDUNDANCY NOTICE DECLARED.

'CHRONIC ALCOHOLISM': HIS DIVORCE DECREE PROCLAIMED.

'ANTI-SOCIAL HABITS': THE HOSTEL WARDEN BELL-OVED AS HE TOSSED HIM INTO THE STREET.

HE HAD A FRIEND ONCE, MRS McGEARY, BUT EVEN SHE LEFT WITHOUT A WORD.

NOW EVEN HIS OWN KIND CAN'T BEAR HIS PRESENCE.

SIDNEY CRUMB IS A SOLITARY MAN.



IT'S JUST A BIT O' RASH! I AIN'T NO SMELLY DISEASED FLEABAG! IT'S JUST THE WIND'S HARD ON ME OLD SKIN.

DAMN THE HOSTEL, THROWIN' ME OUT AS SOON AS IT GETS A BIT WARM. I AIN'T UP TO SLEEPIN' ROUGH NO MORE.



AWH NO!

THEM BLEEDIN' SNIFFERS, THEY MESSED ME STUFF UP AGAIN, IT'S ALWAYS THE SAME, NO RESPECT.

I'LL CATCH 'EM, SORT 'EM OUT I WILL!



SIDNEY CRUMB IS A SOLITARY MAN, HE DRINKS TO FORGET BECAUSE THERE IS NOTHING HE WANTS TO REMEMBER.



BUT NO AMOUNT OF DRINK WILL MAKE HIM FORGET THIS NIGHT...

WASSAT?

... BECAUSE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HIS ADULT LIFE...



... HE IS SUDDENLY VERY, VERY SOBER.



HE REACTS
WITHOUT
HESITATION.



EAGER TO USE
HIS POWER.

ROOWR

TO FEEL THE THRILL
HE'S LONGED FOR
THROUGHOUT
THESE IDLE MONTHS.



HE THROWS CAUTION
TO THE WIND...

KREEEE

UF



AND IS TOSSED ASIDE BY
A SNARLING TORNADO
THAT EVAPORATES IN THE
SPECTRAL GLOOM.



ARE YOU
OKAY? DID
THAT THING
HURT YOU?

GERROF, I'M
ALRIGHT. JUST NEED A
DRINK TO STEADY ME
NERVES. IT WERE ONE
A THEM SNIFFER KIDS.
STUFF TURNS 'EM
INTA MANIACS
IT DOES.

NEAR SCARED
ME T'DEATH HE DID!
TRIED TO KILL ME,
CLAWIN' AND BITIN'
LIKE A BLEEDIN'
ANIMAL!



NO, WHATEVER
IT WAS THAT
ATTACKED YOU,
IT WASN'T
HUMAN.

IT WAS
TOO FAST, TOO
STRONG, IT
ALMOST BROKE
MY RIBS - NOT
EVEN A CRAZED
HUMAN IS
THAT
STRONG!

AN JUST
WOT D'YA
THINK YOU
ARE, Y'BIG
PONCE?

THINK YOU'RE
A SUPER'ERO
OR SOMETHIN'?



I'D SUGGEST YOU
LEAVE AND FIND
SOMEWHERE
TO SPEND THE
NIGHT.

I'M GOING
AFTER IT...
WHATEVER
IT WAS.

THERE Y'GO,
'CLEAR OFF' HE
SEZ, IT'S ALWAYS
THE SAME,
NO ONE CARES.



THERE IS NO MOVE-
MENT, NO SOUND.
THE SILENCE IS
DEAFENING.



"IT'S HERE
SOMEWHERE,
I CAN SENSE
A PRESENCE."



THE MOON CLOUDS HER MEMORY, OTHER-
WISE SHE MIGHT RECALL ANOTHER TIME,
A DIFFERENT PLACE, AN ALTERNATE
REALITY.



DADDY WILLIAMS SAID
HE SEEN THE CAPTAIN
ONCE, WHEN HE BATTLED
THAT VILLAIN IN THE
COMIC SHOP SAID HE
FOUGHT LIKE A
WILD THING.

HE'LL MAKE
MINCEMEAT OF
THESE THUGS.

HE'S
A REAL
HERO.



DO YOU
REALLY THINK
HE'LL COME AND
FREE US?

THERE'S
NO ONE ELSE,
SUE.

SOMETHING
WEIRD'S GOING ON
OUT THERE. THREE
MONTHS WE BEEN IN
HERE AND NO FULL
MOON. IT'S CRAZY!



COME
OUT, LET'S
TALK!

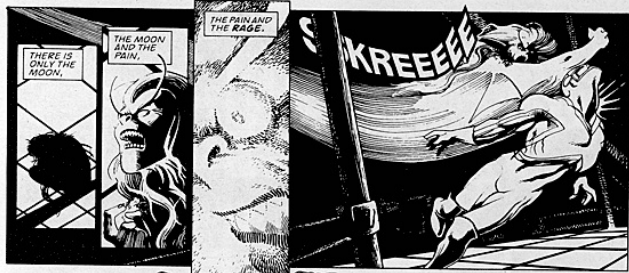
MEGGAN?
WHY DO YOU
LOOK FORWARD
TO THE FULL
MOON SO...?

I DON'T, SUE.
I SWEAR, REALLY
I DON'T!



I
DREAD
IT!

SHE HURTS,
TRYING TO REMEMBER
HURTS, TRYING TO THINK
HURTS.





WHY DID SHE RUN? SHE SEEMED TO RECOGNISE ME JUST BEFORE SHE STOPPED ATTACKING... SHE WAS TERRIFIED... BUT WHY?

SHE WASN'T TRYING TO ESCAPE. I CAN STILL SENSE HER PRESENCE NEARBY.

BUT IT'S NOT AS IF SHE'S PREPARING TO ATTACK AGAIN.

SHE'S JUST WATCHING.



WATCHING.



WATCHING?



CHINK!



ALRIGHT! WHO THE...



WHO ARE YOU?

MICKY... AND SHE'S MY SISTER, JOSIE... IT'S MEGGAN. SHE... WE... WE...

WE LOOK AFTER MEGGAN. SHE LIVES HERE. SHE HAS DONE FOR MONTHS. WE'RE HER FRIENDS.

WE BRING HER THINGS AND HELP TO KEEP HER CALM WHEN THE MOON'S FULL.



MEGGAN? WHEN THE MOON'S FULL...?

YOU MEAN SHE'S A WERE-WOLF?

DON'T BE SILLY, SHE SAYS SHE'S A MUTANT, LIKE THEY HAVE IN AMERICA. BUT THE FULL MOON MAKES HER GO A BIT CRAZY.

SHE'S NICE REALLY, BUT THAT TRAMP SHE SAID HE STUNK, LIKE A DEAD ANIMAL.

SHE COULDN'T BEAR IT, SHE JUST WENT WILD.



SHE WATCHES FROM THE DARK, THROUGH THE BLINDING PAIN.

SHE SEES THE CAPTAIN AND HER FRIENDS, BUT HE IS HURTING THEM.

MEGGAN! THE FULL MOON WOLF?

MEGGAN: HERE, SOME MONTHS AGO, FRIENDS THINGS TO CALM MOON... SILENT MUTANT HAVE INGO MOON, A CLEVER NICE STUNK DEAD WOLF.

HE'S THE HERO, BUT HE'S HURTING HER FRIENDS.



SHE IS CONFUSED, AND THE CONFUSION HURTS.

WAIT!

SKREEEE



MEGGAN! STOP...

PLEASE, MEGGAN, STOP!

BUT SHE CAN NO LONGER HEAR, SHE HAS SUCCEEDED TO THE PAIN THAT CLOUDS HER SENSES.



THERE IS ONLY THE PAIN.



RUN, MICKY!



The immortal Robert E. Howard was perhaps the greatest single adventure story writer of this century, and his equal has never been found. He specialized in tales of sword-slashing adventure, full of black magic and wicked villains, delicious heroines and exotic scenery. His prose was sturdy and rough-hewn, thronged with weird imagery and vivid descriptions. His most famous creation was, of course, *Conan the Barbarian*, who has for the past fifty years been the most popular hero in all adventure fiction. Why? Because Conan is the type of man that every spotty fantasy fan would like to be: a huge, roaring swaggering soldier of fortune, bull-necked and barrel-chested, with a quick temper and a constant desire for women and adventure in more or less equal proportions. In short, Conan isn't a wimp! This, in a nutshell, is his story.

Robert E. Howard was born in Peaster, Texas, in 1906. He started to write seriously after a variety of jobs which included newspaper reporter, private secretary, stenographer and soda jerk. He made his first sale in 1924, to the magazine *Weird Tales*, which specialized in all things dark and sinister. From then on there was no stopping him. He began to work at a feverish pace, cranking out just about every imaginable kind of yarn, from Oriental and Western adventures, to tales of sport, crime and piracy.

Howard made his mark in two main areas — horror fiction and what we now call 'Sword and Sorcery'. In fact, he created the S & S field virtually single-handed. Each new Howard yarn was a real event for lovers of heroic fantasy. He brought to his fiction a rough-hewn treatment and robust imagination. Some modern-day writers have slated his work on the ground of excessive violence and 'emotional immaturity', but there can be no denying that Howard was an expert in his chosen field. He created a small army of tough-nut characters, including *King Kull*, *Esau Cairn*, *Dennis Dorgan*, *Bran Mak Morn*, *Francis X. Gordon*, *Kirby O'Donnell* and many more. His most famous creation was, of course, the subject of this article, Conan of Cimmeria, who made his debut in 1932, in a fast-paced yarn called *The Phoenix on the Sword*. Howard went on to write another twenty or so Conan stories, including such epics as *Red Nails*, *People of the Black Circle*, and the novel-length *Hour of the Dragon*, later published as *Conan the Conqueror*. (Ironically Howard's finest short story wasn't a Conan adventure at all, but the spine-tingling *Worms of the Earth*, featuring the



THE PEN BEHIND THE SWORD

Although Robert E. Howard died in 1936, his creation, Conan the Barbarian, lives on as one of the most popular characters in adventure fiction. PETE SCOTT casts an affectionate eye over man and myth.

Pictish king *Bran Mak Morn*).

Conan became so popular with the readers of *Weird Tales* that Howard abandoned his other fantasy heroes to concentrate on the brawling barbarian. The end came in June, 1936, when Howard took his own life. Like the man in the Beatles' song *A Day In The Life*, "he blew his mind out in a car." He was thirty years, four months and twenty days old. After his untimely death, a series of reprint editions served to keep the legend of Conan alive. First there was *Skull Face and Others* (Arkham House, 1946), then *Conan the Conqueror* (Gnome Press, 1950). Later in the 50s, fantasy author L. Sprague De Camp rewrote several of Howard's non-Conan stories, turning them into adventures of the brawling Cimmerian. He also joined forces with Scandinavian fantasy fan Bjorn Nyberg and American SF scribe Lin Carter to write several all-new Conan yarns.

In 1966 Lancer Books published the first series of Conan paperbacks in the States, thus laying the groundwork for the Conan phenomenon as we know it today. Then, in 1970, Marvel Comics secured the rights to Conan and several other Robert E. Howard characters. The result was *Conan the Barbarian*, the first and most successful Sword and Sorcery comic book of them all, often imitated but never equalled. Oddly enough it wasn't an immediate success, but after a shaky start it went on to become one of the most popular titles of the 70s and 80s.

The early issues of *Conan* were scripted by Roy Thomas and visualized by British-born artist Barry Smith, who now insists on calling himself Barry Windsor-Smith (pretentious berk!). Thomas and Smith worked well together. Their efforts were vital, colourful and dramatic. Smith's artwork was especially exotic and mood-evoking on such tales as *Rogues in the House*, *Web of the Spider-God* and *Dweller in the Dark*.

Sadly, Smith left *Conan the Barbarian* after drawing only twenty issues or thereabouts. He was replaced by John Buscema, who has since made the series his own. Buscema has churned out literally thousands of pages of savage barbarian artwork. He is perhaps more closely associated with Conan than any other artist. "Conan is my favourite character," he once told an interviewer. "I'd like to do Conan exclusively, because Conan is not one of these guys who flies, or can drill himself head-first into the ground or anything. To me, Conan is real. I love drawing Conan. He's my kind

of guy." This love of the character is evident in every page drawn by Buscema. His early work on the black and white *Savage Sword* magazine was utterly, stark raving, foaming-at-the-mouth stupendous, especially when it was inked by Alfredo P. Alcala. *Tower of the Elephant* from *Savage Sword* no 24, must surely rate as one of the most gorgeously rendered comic strips of all time. A masterpiece.

Conan has now appeared in just about every illustrated format imaginable: a full-colour monthly comic, a large-format black and white title, several whopping tabloid-sized albums, a syndicated newspaper strip and a series of illustrated paperbacks. He has also been the subject of a full-length feature film entitled simply *Conan*. Directed by John Millius, and starring body-builder Arnold Schwarzenegger in the central role, it was released in mid-'82 to mixed notices. Most reviewers felt that although Schwarzenegger looked the part, his performance and delivery lacked impact. This view was summed up rather neatly by British fan Graeme Bassett in a letter published in *Starburst* no 48. "Poor old Arnold," Graeme wrote. "When you look bored even while you're being crucified, you've really got problems."

Despite all this, the *Conan* movie is still worth seeing for its handsome sets and top-notch action scenes. A sequel is being lensed even as I type these words, with bizarre rock artist Grace Jones in a supporting role. Let's all hope that big Arnie has taken a few acting lessons in the interim.

Like all cult heroes, Conan has his fair share of imitators. These include such unlikely characters as *Brak the Barbarian*, *Elak of Atlantis* and *Jirel of Joiry* (a fiery and tempestuous female barbarian, no less!). If you're a newcomer to the S & S field, and don't really know where to begin, you might try Fritz Leiber's books about those two fun-loving rogues, Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser. Leiber's stories are written at a frantic headlong pace that pulls the reader along willy nilly. Also good are Britisher Michael Moorcock's books about the doomed Lord Elric of Melniboné, especially *Stormbringer* and *The Stealer of Souls*. On the other hand you should strenuously avoid most of Lin Carter's *Thorngar and Kellory* yarns. Likewise comic book scriptwriter Gardner Fox's *Kothar* series. Feeble and derivative stuff, indeed.

On the comic strip front, the people at DC Comics were the first to jump onto the Conan bandwagon with their



A potpourri of Hybrian delineation: the four artists most closely associated with Conan in his present Marvel incarnation. Top to bottom: John Buscema, Ernie Chan, Alfredo Alcala, Pablo Marcos.

excellent *Sword of Sorcery*. This title starred Fritz Leiber's Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser, and was graced by the first-rate artistry of Howard Chaykin. Inexplicably it barely made it into double figures before ceasing publication. DC later tried their luck with such mediocre titles as *The Stalker* and *Claw* before hitting paydirt with the long-running *Warlord*. The moral is clear: if at first you don't succeed...

In the early 70s the short-lived Atlas Comics Group foisted two shameless *Conan* rip-offs onto an unsuspecting public. The first of these, *Wulf the Barbarian*, was "set on a planet the size of which is beyond mortal comprehension", while the second took place in the far future. These comics had one important factor in common: they both stank (pee-yew!). Thankfully neither of them survived for more than a couple of issues.

On the other hand Michael Moorcock's Elric of Melniboné has enjoyed a long and varied career in the comics. He first appeared in an early issue of *Conan* and later cropped up in *Star-Reach* magazine, in a story by Eric Kimball and Robert Gould. This was followed in 1979 by a twenty-page excerpt from a Moorcock story, scripted and drawn by Frank Brunner. A few years later, Roy Thomas and artist P. Craig Russell joined forces to adapt Moorcock's premier Elric story to the comic strip form. The result was *The Dreaming City*, Marvel's second and best-ever "graphic novel".

More recently, in April 1983, Pacific Comics launched a new bi-monthly *Elric* comic, again written by Roy Thomas and drawn by Michael T. Gilbert over Craig Russell's layouts. *Elric* is a weird book, full of ornate flourishes and horrible garish colours. One of the most visually striking comics ever.

The past couple of years have witnessed such offbeat variations on the basic S & S format as Dave Sim's *Cerebus the Aardvark* (the world's first barbarian aardvark, would you believe?) and Mad artist Sergio Aragones' *Groo the Wanderer*, a clever and engaging parody of all kinds of heroic fantasy clichés and devices. Meanwhile Marvel have tried unsuccessfully to duplicate their *Conan* formula with such titles as *King Kull* and *Red Sonja*. They have just launched a new series based on Howard's puritan adventurer Solomon Kane, but it is unlikely to equal the success of *Conan the Barbarian*. After a career spanning half a century, *Conan*'s popular appeal is as strong as ever. He is truly the King of heroic fantasy. Long may he reign.

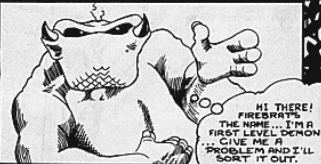
showcase update

Backtracking a few centuries, we take a second peek at the manic machinations of Mr Simon Jacobs, that remarkably talented rat catcher of Derbyshire.

In The Wide Cold Lands in The Time before the fall of The High King, widespread were the dangers of magic. It was a Time of wonder, mystery and adventure but with the waning of the resources of earth-power it became increasingly a time of...

DISENCHANTMENT

HOW FARES OUR DEMON DIMINUTIVE, EH, MASTER BOOKWISER?



WELL - IT'S DIFFICULT TO SAY REALLY MY FRIEND, BUT ON THE WHOLE...

GENERALLY SPEAKING, ON BALANCE, I'D SAY...





JUST NOT EVERY
DAY- THAT'S ALL..



NONE TOO
GOOD.

FOOLISH
LITTLE DEPNIX
IS DECEIT BEFORE
THE EYES OF THE
MIGHTY KANCOREX...



NOW THIS MAY LOOK
HOPELESS BUT I'VE
STILL GOT MY
GOOD OL' DO OR
THE GAMBIT...
WATCH THIS...

AND BARELY A
CRUNCHABLE
MOUTHFUL TO
SAVOUR... BUT
I EATS IT ALL
THE SAME.



COME ON...
JUST A LITTLE
CLOSER AND...



SUFFER
TURKEY!



WELL SORCERER, WHEN
DEMONS FAIL NEEDS MUST
MAKE STEEL SUFFICE ...
ARM THYSELF!

FRANKLY I FEEL THAT WE
MIGHT AS WELL GREET OUR
NEMESIS LYING DOWN, MY FRIEND
- IN WHAT CHANCE CAN
WE HOPE TO ... WHAT THE ...

I DON'T
BELIEVE IT!
I JUST DON'T
BELIEVE IT!









Night Raven

Pathology ~ episode one

Writer: Jamie Delano

Illustrations: Alan Davis

He was many miles from New York when dusk began to lower its grey cloak around him. He did not know where he was and had only the vaguest idea of where he was going. He remembered a large rambling house on the coast — the grey sea and the sky — the sand dunes sculpted by the constant wind. He knew that there was more memory there.

He was walking, almost marching, with steps perfectly measured by the evenly spaced railway sleepers on which he trod. Hypnotised by the rhythm of his movement, his unblinking eyes stared at the slowly boiling clouds, which, lit by the low glow of the dying sun, climbed in tiers above the horizon.

It was the past that drew him again. The long distant youthful past which he had shared with Bill Hershey. The past of disillusionment and terror — the grey, muddled past of a young man who needed to forget.

He had no will to resist the irrational need that had grown within him. It was the destruction of his enemy Yi Yang which had triggered this vague quest for memory. Without her opposition to provide a reason for his existence he had need of a history to define his identity.

He was the deathless bird of night, Night Raven.

He walked and the clouds faded into black. He walked into the anonymous night and into a mind which had escaped to the shadowlands from the intrusion of unthinkable reality. He walked and past merged into present.

He had walked the same way then; in the time before. His feet heavy, mashing the slick Belgian mud into an even more vicious slime. He had been the last of a line of men, or at least the shocked shells of men. They were moving in a grotesquely comic file, sliding and staggering, each linked to the man ahead by an outstretched arm and hand clasped in a webbing belt. All the men, except for himself and the guiding orderly, wore bandages across their eyes. They were mustard gas victims. He alone could see, but he did not know where he was, nor did he care. Sheer horror had driven him to cast himself on the erratic mercy of a war-torn world. The enormity of the waste of life — the gigantism of the evil that squatted over the land — had caused him to renounce all responsibility. He had made himself apart from the world. Now he was the tail of a human crocodile

slithering out of the swamp of death — a strange contrary quirk of evolution. The survival of the weak and of the unlucky.

He had walked right out of the war in Europe and half-way across the Atlantic Ocean. Unceasingly he had paced the rolling deck of the hospital ship feeling the fresh, cold wind combing the clinging taint of death out of his hair — winnowing around his body and cleansing him. Once or twice on the voyage he had thought that he might speak again, but the fluid power of the high seas and the wide reach of the sky subdued him and he remained silent.

One after another the liquid days slid past, threshed into the ship's milky wake as the small convoy distanced itself from the blighted continent of Europe. He had felt the pressure beginning to ease. His intelligence, shocked out of alignment by the horror and irrationality of war, began to re-assert some control.

It was during the dogwatch on the eighth night out to sea that the U-Boats struck. The sea was calm and the sky, silvered slightly by a small moon, was deep and tranquil. It was a night for contemplation; he had thought as he walked slowly round the deck; a night for realisation, and revelation. There must be some crazy kind of sense to it all — if he could just stand far enough outside the mayhem he was sure that he would be able to see it.

In a triple instant of red and white the torpedo flowers bloomed lurid against the sumptuous velvet of the sea. Three ships, previously veiled by the soft night, were pinpointed with brilliant precision — transfixed, like dark moths, to Death's mounting board by needles of fire. And then the shock-waves boomed over the water.

He had waited patiently, almost welcoming, for the death which he knew sped submerged towards them. He was calm amongst the fear and frantic activity which flowed around him. He waited for the flowers of fire to grow on him like hallucinations.

Again time flowed within him. Then became now and his mind fluttered, confused, between them.

Stiffly, like a ragged automaton, his body continued walking. He felt it beginning again. A deep trembling beneath the soles of his feet. A hum which howled into a screaming roar. Something shook the world effortlessly and smashed into his back. He was hurled like a broken puppet down the embankment; his world screamed and spun. The

drowning blind men swam before his eyes. He could do nothing; his mind fled into the blackness and the madness.

The 23.50 Downline Express continued unperturbed. In the bushes, lying where the steel shoulder of the train had shrugged it, the smashed and twisted shell of Night Raven was still and vacant.

Angela Cleaver closed the file of press cuttings and sat for a moment staring at the small ridges which lined her finger nails. Which ever way you added it up it came out damn strange she thought. If all the information in the records was accurate — and it should be, T.R.A.C.E. were nothing if not thorough, usually to the point of tedium — then the guy must be over eighty years old. Christ, maybe this time she had really come up with a hot one.

She did not know exactly what had gone on up there in Wisconsin, but whatever it was — and there were whispers around the Service that it was something nuclear — it was big and it had rattled them. It had sent out shock waves of alarm the ripples of which had even infiltrated such an obscure backwater of the Service as T.R.A.C.E.

The request had come down on Priority Yellow, which was drop everything code. There had been a handful of references, some recent, some dating back ten years or more and the name. It was the name which had brought the smile of satisfaction to her mouth and the thrill of knowing that she was two steps ahead of the game.

She had already started a file on Night Raven. The name had re-occurred on a collation programme which she had devised and so she had scanned the data-banks and come up with enough fragments of filed information to start a strangely inconsistent dossier. The Priority Yellow request was all that she had needed to pull out all the stops and get all the computer time which she needed to sort out the inconsistencies. For once in her career she was in the right place at the right time. For once she had the authority to do what she was good at. It was not easy for a woman in the Secret Service, especially if she was black.

She smiled ruefully to herself, remembering her naïveté. She had been honoured when, as a young college

graduate with an interest in computers and information retrieval, she had been approached with the opportunity to serve her country. She had really felt a part of it all. It had not dawned on her until much later that she had been no more than a cosmetic brushstroke of government policy — a token of the early sixties tendency towards a facade of liberalism. She had genuinely believed that it was a fair system. She was much wiser now. Twenty years of being shunted from one low key section to another, of having her talents used and neutralised had left her fatalistic but with a hard core of resentment. With twenty years seniority they had hidden her away in the office which dealt with everybody else's cast off cases.

T.R.A.C.E., the initials stood for Tactical Research and Cultural Examination. For five years she had been running the department and she still was not sure exactly what it was supposed to do. Now, though, she had a lever. They had come to her. They wanted this man Night Raven and she was in a position to get him for them. Finally she had some power: she was not going to waste it.

With the full use of the computer she had been able to pull a surprising amount of information about the bizarre, almost unbelievable character, Night Raven. According to the file which she had built up, the mysterious entity had been involved in a lot of 'incidents' in a lot of places over the years. The information was all consistent with itself, but the time-scale puzzled her. The guy could not have been around that long. Could he?

She stood up suddenly, the clock on the office wall showed 8.30pm. She was late. She felt a stab of guilt, she had promised to watch some T.V. with her son Howie. He was fifteen now and growing away from her. It was strange how time slipped by, she thought to herself, re-opening the file and glancing again at the two pictures which dominated the first page.

One was an artists impression of Night Raven the 'masked avenger'. It was extracted from an old 1930's edition of the Daily Bugle. He stood braced for action, gun blazing, clean-cut trenchcoat flapping, hat pulled down over masked face. He was the people's hero fighting crime on the streets. The other was a much later photograph which had been syndicated to the world's press in the 1950's. It purported to show Night Raven as the notorious East Village Strangler. He was turning, startled from his victim by the flash-bulb. The clothes and the mask were the same as those depicted in the earlier illustration, but her instincts told her that neither picture was the true likeness of Night Raven.

Eyewitness accounts and later, dis-



Night Raven



regarded police evidence, seemed to indicate that the mass-murders of the fifties were perpetrated by an imitator of the real Night Raven. Apart from the documented evidence to support this theory an overwhelming bulk of information regarding Night Raven's other activities placed him, somewhat obliquely, but positively on the side of the angels. No, it did not fit, the photograph was of an imitator.

The pictures were only clues to what he looked like. She tried to summon a face for him from her imagination. Nothing would come except glimpses of a blank mask, floating briefly amongst shadows.

She flicked off the light and slipped out of the office into the brightly lit, empty corridor. The video camera tracked her as she walked the length of the corridor to check out with security - it must be that fat slob Murphy in surveillance she thought. She gave the camera the finger savagely. One in the eye for you creepo. Li'l Angie's got a hot one in her handbag, mind you boys don't get burned.

Somewhere deep inside her a warning bell was tolling - very deep and very slow just enough to leave her feeling slightly hollow. As if she was poised at the mouth of a tunnel that was somehow longer and darker than she knew. She smothered the feeling and pulled the car out into the sparse traffic. She could handle it. She had the resources. She had learned a lot in twenty years of taking the back seat. Now it was her turn to play, her turn to move the pieces.

Howie was asleep when she got in. The T.V. was turned down low but flickering on a late night cops 'n' killers show. She went out into the kitchen to check whether he had eaten, wondered whether to wake him up and say hello, but decided to leave him sleeping. She covered him with a blanket and turned off the T.V. Then, overcome by tiredness, she went to her own room and sat down on the bed to take off her shoes. Her last conscious thought, as the image of Night Raven's mask followed her flickering into sleep, was a gentle admonishment from her subconscious not to become obsessed with fantasy heroes. But it was soon forgotten.

She dreamed of her childhood - of visitin' up-country on her uncle Joe's farm. She dreamed of the grass, of the milk cow and of her Uncle's slow labour which sustained them from the patient earth. She dreamed of peace and balance. Then it was Sunday and they were having chicken in honour of God and the visitin'. Her Aunt Addy, large and strong, was chasing the big black hen around the yard. Feathers flew, and panicked squawking filled the air. Her Aunt's black arm snaked out and gripped scaly yellow

NIGHT RAVEN

legs — a bright knife flashed in the sun. Then to her fascinated horror the big black hen was careering wildly round the yard. It was headless and blood sprayed in fine red jets from the stump of its neck — some of it speckled her white dress brightly. The other hens scattered in terror from its unnatural progress until finally, as if in answer to her Aunt's raucous shout of "Don't you know you're dead, chicken?" — it keeled over, twitching at her feet.

She had felt faint and had refused to eat the chicken after it was cooked.

Fingers pinched his flesh but he did not feel them. Lights shone in his eyes but he did not see them. There were voices, they talked about him, but he did not know who they were or when they spoke. He did not know who he was, or when he was and he did not care. His world was his mind and he took it as he found it.

The 'home' was on the coast. Something told him New England, but he did not know where that was and it did not matter. The sea air was supposed to be good for sick people. There were a lot of sick people at the home. He found it a strange and fascinating place to be in. He observed mankind at its extremities of character against a background of wild skies and rough seas.

There were blind men there who tried to play chess with each other, their arguments made him cry with silent mirth. There was a man who always wanted to hold his hand — his face was scared and made him want to laugh as well. There was the one who would ambush him with catalogues of atrocity, and the quiet ones whose eyes might suddenly gleam with random violence. He watched them all but would not learn their names.

He watched the doctors as well. He watched the nurses: how they manipulated and experimented with the chaos of the home's society. The energy wasted by all of the pointless activity around him frustrated him. His ears were full of the babbling of fools. It was too much for him. He stepped further out. He stopped eating. He economised on breathing. The world lost its form and moved about him in shapes of light. Voices and sounds echoed and pulsed in waves around him. He was liquid and he flowed. It was a dizzy ecstasy. But then it was back, nibbling at the tapestry of oblivion which shielded him, that fluttering moth of fear. It was small but it was growing.

A drowning blind man swam before his eyes and arms reached out for him. He wrestled with the fear, tried to soothe it,

to calm it. He tried to contain it, smother it, but it struggled inside him like a cat in a sack. He could feel it worrying at him, trying to drag him back. Back to the blood and the mud. Back to the ship and the drowning man. Back to the home.

There was no going back, there was only changing and shifting and echoing through the years. He must rest, the pressure was forcing him down into the mud, the black, sticky mud of oblivion. He must rest.

She woke early. Howie was standing over her, telephone in hand, eyes filled with sleep. "Morning Ma. It's for you. H.Q."

She took the 'phone from him, excitement mounting inside her. It had to be him. They never bothered to call her at home.

"Hello," she said, professionally. "Clever." She listened for a moment and then spoke again.

"O.K. Contact the locals and get them to hold the body. They've got a private ambulance and a motor car. Papers for the coroner, along there. Oh, and book up a second lab and a pathologist for tonight. We're priority. Yehow on this case so let's use it and stay ahead of the game."

Thirty minutes later she was mobile on the freeway. Excitement and disappointment mingled within her. The case was beginning to take off, and she had no time to lose. If she did not watch out the boys upstairs were bound to get wind of it and snaffle it out of her hands. This was her operation. She had been the first to pick up on the Night Raven thing and she was going to sew it all up and drop it in their laps — signed sealed and delivered. There was more to it now than another strange case on the T.R.A.C.E. weirdo file. Somewhere, although she refused to admit it to herself, on some level she was personally involved. She needed to know who this man was. Why he did the things he had done. What he looked like. Again the shadowed image of the mask flickered through her mind. What had driven him so far from mankind that he should haunt them. She more than half hoped that the body that she was going to see was not that of Night Raven. It seemed an incongruous way for such a man to die, to be run over by an express train that did not even stop.

The T.R.A.C.E. computer had picked up the report from the early morning wire. An unidentified and mutilated corpse found by a railroad track. Nothing remarkable in itself, but the computer had locked in on the identifying marks and personal effects. There had been a hat, a coat, a mask and weapons: two

revolvers and a knife. The serial numbers on the guns had come up untraceable. It was a small enough lead but she had a feeling about it.

Eight hours later her feeling had grown to conviction. She signalled right and pulled up the exit slipway from the freeway. It was dark and raining and multi-coloured reflections streaked the wet streets. Partly because she could, and partly because she was suddenly anxious not to be on her own with the grisly corpse in the back of the ambulance for any longer than was necessary, she flicked on the beacons and the siren, cutting a path through the city traffic as she headed for the lab. She glanced again at the sealed package on the empty seat to the right of her. It contained the filthy, torn rags of clothing which the dead man had been wearing. She knew now that the body in the back of the ambulance was Night Raven. She had viewed it briefly at the Sheriff's station when she had collected it. She felt uneasy at the thought of it lying back there in its stiff plastic bag with those wide, staring eyes that seemed almost alive. She had not been able to bring herself to examine the corpse. The glimpse of the twisted, scar-ravaged shoulders, roped and knotted with abnormal ligaments and sinews which had assured her eye when the sheriff had turned back the sheet, had driven her right and cold inside. She had no memory at all of the face — just those wild eyes sucking the warmth out of her. There was no doubt in her mind. This had to be Night Raven; whatever he was.

The pathologist was a small, bald, sweetly man: the kind who seem to wear the aura of their profession around them. He was unhappy at being kept out late, a fact he made no attempt to hide.

"Lady, if you think that I've got nothing better to do than hang around late waiting to cut up corpses for you you're wrong!"

She pulled rank on him and took great delight in doing so. Now he was robbed and masked, the body stretched out on the slab. She was seated by the intercom in the dimly-lit ante-room. She had her back to the observation window, but was ready to take notes as he dictated.

"You can come in and watch if you want," he leered. "It's just a piece of dead meat."

However, as soon as he uncovered the body his manner changed.

"Jesus H Christ, lady! What have you got here? How did you say this guy was killed? This boy is a mess."

The thin voice from the intercom began a grisly catalogue of injury.

"The body is male — Caucasian. Age — indeterminate, between thirty and fifty. The skin area is approximately seventy



percent scar tissue. Probably a Vietnam Vet I guess. He must have been napalmed. There are numerous signs of other previous injuries. Multiple gunshot wounds and lacerations — all healed but showing no sign of surgery or other medical attention. There is also evidence of prior multiple fracture of limbs and rib-cage all showing signs of mutated healing due to lack of support. He must have been some kind of Superman to survive what he's been through in the past. If he got this lot in the war he must have a whole sackful of Purple Hearts."

As the pathologist continued with his work the sensation of unease and tension in Angela Cleaver's stomach grew into what she finally had to acknowledge as fear.

Rather than resolving themselves, the inconsistencies in her file were being re-inforced. How had this man survived so much injury and physical devastation? How could he be so old and yet show so few signs of ageing?

The pathologist's own words: "He must have been some kind of Superman", echoed in her head as she ran her mind back over the contents of the file for the thousandth time. She had located and collated evidence of Night Raven's crime fighting activities over a span of fifty years. From the early 'thirties, when he was the somewhat flamboyant 'masked avenger' who punished wrongdoers with ruthless honour — to the present day when he had seemingly wrought havoc amongst the super-elite of international crime and intrigue. Over all this stretch of years one name had re-occurred frequently, Yi Yang: a mysterious and elusive Chinese woman who was reputedly the head of the notorious Dragon Tong in the 1930's but whose name appeared rarely in any other association than linked with that of Night Raven over the next fifty years.

Her head was spinning. It did not make sense. For these two to have been active for that length of time would mean that they must both be in their dotage. Either that or... She began to smile but the humour was stillborn. Either that or else they must be immortal. As her mind raced with the connotations of the fantastic idea the pathologist's voice spoke again.

"Well, I guess we'd better open this character up now and see what made him tick."

A feeling of monstrous dread seemed to flood over her. With limbs like lead, but irresistibly drawn, she stood and turned to the viewing window.

The alarm bell was clanging inside her, deep and rapid, like a metal heartbeat but she was too far into the tunnel to turn back now.

he fear was coming for him — coming to drag him back — forcing him to struggle in the

light.

He did not want to struggle. He wanted the warm darkness of oblivion. He wanted to rest. He would not go back out there with the strange made people. They could not make him.

Of course they could not make him. He was the Raven of the Night.

A doctor with the skull-face of terror reached out a long green hand and touched his chest with a scarlet mandarin fingernail. He screamed at the burning pain and felt his very being stretched and elongated, sucked and drawn into reality like water down a sink.

She was frozen immobile with shock and terror. There had been a wild tearing scream of fear and rage. It might have had its origins with any one of them, or all three. She did not know.

Her mind reeled. The corpse of Night Raven was on its feet. She could see the vicious tracery of scar tissue that furrowed his back. She could see the rippling contours of muscle and tendon that lashed and rolled as he slashed savagely at the lacerated face of the pathologist with the scalpel grasped in his outstretched hand. It was as if the creature had no skin — the flesh seemed living, raw. The thrashing arm moved closer. Blood splashed in fountains across the sterile, white-tiled walls. The body of the pathologist slid to the floor but still the flailing arm cut and slashed. The head and the torso were red and shredded, the sheet that tangled the creature's lower limbs was printed in the gaudy random art of violence.

Horror and revulsion burst from her in a strangled choking sob.

"Nooo. No more..."

The creature froze, crouching. Then rose slowly, a feral nightmare shape, turning away from the corpse it had just created. Its left hand stole upwards and covered its face as it swung towards her, and all she could see were those eyes. Those cold, blazing eyes that seemed to chew into her like diamonds.



Continued.

MWOM showcase

Triumph and Tragedy

TIM PERKINS is a 24 year old freelance illustrator, who for some years has harboured a dark and shameful obsession: a compulsive desire to enter the world of comics.

With the exception of this sad aberration, Mr Perkins seems otherwise to be a remarkably sane and reasonable man. He's a graphic designer, a member of S.I.A.D. (the Society of Industrial Artists and Designers) and if his pathetic smokescreen of modesty is anything to judge by, has garnered some little reputation for himself in this field. Why, he even understands huge, unwieldy words like 'Metempsychosis' (which, incidentally, means the migration of a soul from one body to another).

The Tim Perkins story has all the ingredients of a classic tear jerker... power, pathos, and a great man brought low by one tragic flaw in his make-up. Read it and weep...



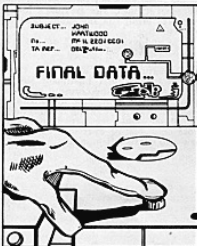
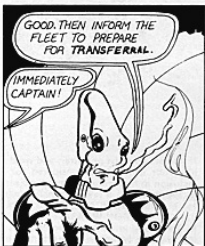
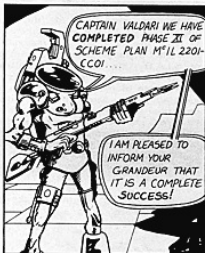
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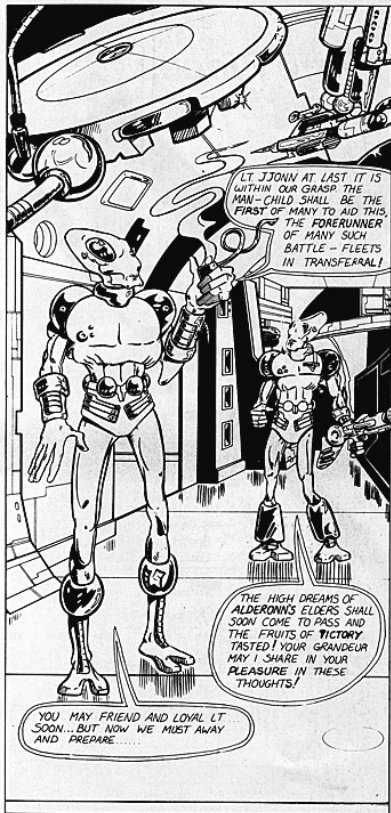
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DEEP SPACE AND A SCOUT SHIP PART OF
A LARGER BATTLE CRUISER IN TURN PART
OF AN EVEN LARGER BATTLE FLEET OF
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STAN LEE THE
PRESENTS

X-MEN AND THE MICRONAUTS!

THIS PLACE
IS NOT
REAL. IT IS A
REALM OF
NIGHTMARE.

AND, LIKE ALL
NIGHTMARES,
IT CAN HOLD NO
TERROR...

...SAVE FOR THOSE
WHO ARE TRAPPED
WITHIN IT!

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SO I GUESS WE AIN'T DEAD, OR ELSE WHY WOULD THE ENTITY BE TRYIN' TA KILL US?!

MAYBE SLOW DEATH BY TORTURE'S HIS STOCK-IN-TRADE?

HE DID DISPLAY A SICK SENSE O' HUMOR WHEN HE DESTROYED D'ARNE!!

*A HELPLESS FRONTIER FARMWORLD IN THE MICROVERSE -- BOB.



ONLY IT LOOKS LIKE THE JOKE'S ON ME THIS TIME!

THE WEARDINGS' SUDDEN ASSAULT SENDS BUG SPRAWLING IN THE SLIME.



IT COVERS HIM, ENVELOPS HIM...

...AND WITHIN IT A STRANGE METAMORPHOSIS TAKES PLACE.



CHANGED... BUG MATCHES OUT.



WHAT ONCE HAD BEEN A TWO-LEGGED INSECTWORLD NOW CRAWLS OVER THE GROUND... AS AN ACTUAL INSECT!

FINISHED WITH BUG, THE WEARDINGS TURN ON...



...FIREFLYTE!

SHE IS A PSYCHIC SONGSTRESS. HER MELODIES ATTUNE HER TO THE BINDING ENERGY OF THE MICROVERSE... THE ENIGMA FORCE.

SILAS EEEEEEEEEEE SILAS PEEEEEEEEEE

THUS, HER SINGING IS BOTH HER
WEAPON...AND HER DEFENSE.

BUT THE WEIRDINGS
HAVE ARCANIC POWERS
OF THEIR OWN--

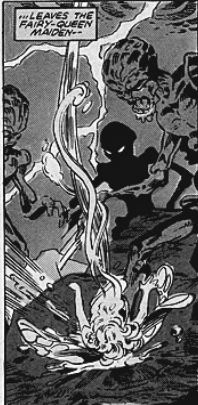
SILISILASREEE



--AS THEY
SUCK THE
SOUND OF
WAVES OUT OF
THE VERY AIR!

TO BE SUDDENLY
DEPRIVED OF
HER SONG...

...LEAVES THE
FAIRY-QUEEN
MAIDEN--



--QUITE
HELPLESS!

HE IS ACROYEAR,
FORMER KING OF
SPARTAK, A
WARRIOR-BORN.

HE FEARS
NOTHING THAT
HIS ENERGY-
SWORD CAN
SLICE.



ENCASED IN HIS SPARTAK-
FORGED ARMOR, HE IS
ALL BUT INVINCIBLE.

THUS THE
ASSAULT UPON
HIM STRIKES AT
THE SPOT NO
ARMOR CAN
SHIELD...

ACROYEAR'S
HEART!

SOUL OF
SPARTAK!



LEST MINE EYES
DECEIVE ME--
'TIS MY BELOVED
CILICIA SCALING
YON CLIFF!



HEAVY WITH CHILD, SHE HAS SET OUT INTO THE WILDERNESS TO GIVE BIRTH ALONE, AFTER OUR ACROYEAR FASHION.

AWAY WE GO! WEIRD LINGS! THOUGH YOUR NUMBERS APPEAR INFINITE--



--THOU SHALT NOT KEEP THE MIGHTY ACROYEAR FROM ATTENDING... THE BIRTH OF HIS FIRSTBORN SON!



...AND NOT AS A WOMAN'S CRIES MATTER THE SUDDEN STILLNESS.

THOUGH CILICIA AND I ARE BONDED--MAN AND WIFE--SHE CONSIDERS ME A TRAITOR FOR HAVING SACRIFICED OUR WORLD TO DEFEAT BARON KARZA.

I HAVE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO CONVINCE HER OTHERWISE.

STILL, OUR CHILD IS ABOUT TO BE BORN...

PERHAPS HIS BIRTH WILL SOFTEN HER HEART TOWARDS ME THAT WE MAY MEET AGAIN AS LOVERS--



--AND NOT AS WARRIORS OPPOSED.

YOU DELUDE YOURSELF, TRAITOR! MY HEART HARBORS ONLY HATE FOR YOU!

AND THIS CHILD WRENCHED E'EN NOW FROM MY LOINS--

--SHALL BE THE INSTRUMENT OF MY HATE! AND YOUR DESTRUCTION!



I THINK I SHALL NAME HIM... SHAITAN!

THE ACROYEARS ARE AN EBON-SKINNED RACE, BUT OCCASIONALLY AN ALBINO IS BORN AMONG THEM.

SUCH CHILDREN ARE CONSIDERED HARBINGERS OF HOLOCAUSTS TO COME.



THE LAST SUCH BIRTH WAS ACROYEAR'S TWIN. HIS HATRED FOR HIS BLACK-SKINNED BROTHER KNEW NO BOUNDS. IT LED TO THE DESTRUCTION OF SPARTAK.

CILICIA, BY THE WORLD--NO!



HIS NAME, TOO! WAS... SHAITAN!



EVEN AS ACRYEAR
SUCCEUMS TO HIS
OWN PRIVATE HORROR...

...HUNTARR, THE LIVING
WEAPON, FINDS HIM-
SELF ACCOSTED.

HE WHO WAS
HUMAN ONCE...
BEFORE BARDON
KARIS'S BODY
BANKS MADE
HIM A MONSTER...
NOW FINDS HIM-
SELF SURROUNDED
BY ABHORRENT
ABOMINATIONS.

YET HE IS A MICRO-
NAUT. HE WILL
NOT YIELD WITH-
OUT A FIGHT.

SLAY YOU,
HUNTARR? WHY
EVER SHOULD
WE WISH TO
SLAY--

--ONE WHO
IS AS MUCH
A HORROR
AS WE?!

THEY DO NOT
ATTACK HIM.
THEY ACCEPT
HIM.

ELSEWHERE
MARIONETTE
SHLIDERS
AT HIS
SCREAM.

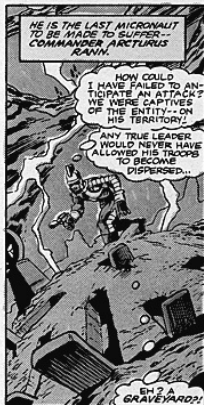
AND WHAT
NIGHTMARE
HAS THE
ENTITY IN
STORE FOR
ME?

YOU SURROUND
ME, YOU HULKING
HORRORS-- NOW
LET US SEE IF
YOU CAN SLAY ME!

OVERWHELMED BY THE
HORROR OF WHAT HE HAS
BECOME, THE LIVING
WEAPON CRIES OUT FOR
HIS LOST HUMANITY!

I'VE LOST
SIGHT OF THE
OTHERS! WHAT IS
HAPPENING TO ME?





THIS MAN FANCES HIMSELF A LEADER OF MEN.

FROM CADET TO SPACE GLIDER HE TRAINED FOR THAT TASK.

AND SO TODAY HE IS COMMANDER OF THE MICRONAUTS.



NOW IT APPEARS THAT HE HAS FAILED NOT ONLY THEM... BUT HIMSELF AS WELL.



...AND ACROYEAR, BIOTRON, DEVI, MICOTRON, NANOTRON, FIREFLYTE, SLUG, PHAROID, AREON.

ALL MICRONAUTS ONCE. ALL DEAD NOW.



WITHIN HIM, HIS SOUL-- HIS SELF-- RESPECT-- SHRIVELS AND DIES.



ONE NIGHTMARE ENDS, ANOTHER IS ABOUT TO BEGIN.

OH, MY POOR CHILDREN! OVERWHELMED BY DARKNESS?

COME, THEN! FOLLOW MY VOICE! LET IT LEAD YOU...



THE ENTITY STANDS, GOLDEN ARMOUR GLEAMING AMID THE POLISHED SURFACES OF A BANQUET ROOM BEYOND COMPARE.

DRAWN TO THE KINDNESS THEY DETECT IN HIS HONEYED VOICE--LIKE COVERING DOGS SLAVERING FOR A FRIENDLY STROKE AFTER A BRUTAL BEATING--THE MICROCHAOTS SLITHER, CRAWL, DANCE AND DRAG THEMSELVES INTO HIS PRESENCE.



DRAW NEAR! SET ASIDE YOUR FEAR!



INTERLUDE:

AT THAT MOMENT, AT PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS ON EARTH, CHARLES XAVIER SLUMPS EXHAUSTED OVER A COMPUTER CONSOLE--HIS ATTEMPT TO LOCATE AND IDENTIFY THE ENTITY HAVING GIVEN WAY TO AN IRRESISTABLE NEED TO SLEEP.

HEY!



CLUSTERED OUTSIDE HIS LAB, FRESH FROM THEIR MORNING SWIM, ARE HIS STUDENTS, THE NEW MUTANTS.

OHO, DANIELLE HAS BLOOD IN HER EYES, SAM!

TRY THAT STUNT AGAIN, DeCOSTA--!

YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN, BOBBY.

ALL O' YOU, SHUSH!



AARRGHH!!

THE ENTITY WEAKENS SUDDENLY!!



HOW COME, RAHNE?

SEE F'R YOURSELF, SAM. WE MUST NA' DISTURB THE PROFESSOR.



... AND JUST AS SUDDENLY REGAINS HIS STRENGTH.

WEAK...POWER SLIPPING...



BY ALL THAT'S UNHOLY, I SWEAR I SHALL NEVER SURRENDER TO SUCH MOMENTS OF WEAKNESS AGAIN!

I SHALL SEE TO IT THAT HE WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THESE LAPSES IS RENDERED INCAPABLE OF CAUSING THEM!

AND YOU, MY GRATEFUL CHILDREN--MY MESMERIZED MICRONAUTS--SHALL HELP ME TOWARDS THAT GOAL!

HOW MAY WE SERVE YOU, MASTER?



Letters to the Mighty World of Marvel Letters Page
 Write to: The Mighty World of Marvel Letters Page,
 Marvel Comics, 23 Bedford Row, London WC1R 4EJ, UK



Dear MWOM

I am feeling much humbled by Andrew Muir's letter in *Mighty World of Marvel* issue 11. I did not mean that the *Wolverine* mini-series is on a par artistically or qualitatively with the first *Captain Britain* issue. I meant that the original idea of a full colour weekly, featuring a brand new hero, was exciting.

I concede that the early *Captain Britain* was more exciting in content. I don't, however, concede the point about *Magik*.

What about printing *Marvel's Secret Wars* in a special full colour magazine, for those of us stuck at college with no Forbidden Planet for miles?

Alan Moore gets better and better. *Swamp Thing* is now the most innovative U.S. comic I have ever read. Jim Jaspers v the Fury - absolutely marvellous. The slight about 'foreigners' is so true of very English people (and not just the upper and middle classes).

Jamie Delano's *Night Raven* is first class. He's brought back the branding Irons, I'm glad to see (always loved the brands on the villains' heads in the comic strip).

The article *Violence in Comics* was interesting, if a little too sharp. Remember, violence in the media allows us to vent our frustrations, just as spectators at a boxing match will shake their fists at the boxer they dislike. Thus, they vent their feelings without having to go home and beat the wife. Violence has always been a part of cartoons on T.V. In comics it is sometimes superfluous, and also worrying in its possible effect on young readers. Ah well, enough of my psycho-social drivel for now. Farewell,

Gus Richardson,
 Humberdale,
 Hull.

PS After his bout of indigestion in ish 11, why not have Merlin go loopy, and let C.B. battle his mentor? (Strong possibilities there, what?)

PPS Thanks to Andrew Muir, seriously, for making me think again. (Johnny Ball, where are you now?)

Dear MWOM,

Well, I take back all of the nasty things I thought about *Marvel UK* when I first heard of the *D.D.'s* - *MWOM* merger. *Mighty World of Marvel* is as good a package as *Daredevil* was, with one notable exception. Judging by the letters you've printed, I would seem to be in a minority (but then, I'm used to that) regarding the card covers. Yuck! Give me good old pulp paper any day of the week of the month of the year of ... well, you know.

I am enjoying the *Cleak & Dagger* stories, not having bought the originals. What with *C'n'D* (CND?) Oh no! I can't support that! Russell Willis would never forgive me) and *Rom*, Bill Mantlo must yet make it as a 'fan fav'. Shouldn't someone warn him now?

Of course, fandom waits with anxious expectation (is there any other kind?) to see what will become of C.D. (Breaker, breaker, pass the Yorkies) following Alan Moore's departure. It might not be so bad if Alan Davis were to remain as artist but I understand he, too, is on his way. Steve Craddock and whomever have a tough job following the Harry One's act. I only hope Steve's writing has improved since he wrote *Closer Encounter*. The

"punchline" was obvious from the first page (or am I just too clever for my own good? Answers on a postcard, please...).

Pete (my generalities are bigger than yours) Scott contributed a typically excellent article on violence in comics. I would like to see a follow-up, with an emphasis on the 'other kind' of violence in comics, as was prevalent in the '60s, when heroes and villains would slug it out for a couple of hours without so much as musing a hair. (Should I make a start now?)

Just a quick word to end on, Rapid. (How's that? It's the way I tell 'em!).

All the best,
 Dale Coe,
 Warrington,
 Cheshire.

Dear Marvel Madmen (and Women),

I enjoyed the latest issue of *Mighty World of Marvel* (issue 11) quite a lot, though like everyone else, I would still like to see you trash the reprints (Yeah I know, "cost").

I didn't much go for the cover; it's my opinion that *Captain Britain* should take up most of the cover every issue, and not be tucked away in a little corner somewhere next to the logo.

The *Captain Britain* strip itself was fine, but... (why does that word always spell doom?) with the weirdness of the story, for the last few issues I've had the feeling that it's getting nowhere fast. The story is great if read in one sitting, and would make a lovely album. But... waiting every four weeks to find that things are getting weirder does tend to make me want to scream when I come to the last page every issue. The *Violence in Comics* bit was fun to read, and the *Showcase* was excellent.

The *Fanzine Reviews*? Well, to some extent I'm involved in *Infinity* myself. I gave them an *Albert the Mouse* strip for issues 3 and 4, so I could see what most of your comments were getting at.

I gave a copy of *Mighty World of Marvel* issue 11 to a friend at work, who doesn't normally like comics (you know the type, he'd rather read about X-ray specs and sea monkeys than the latest *Byrnie* epic) and do you know, he actually read most of it! He turned to me and said "I like the *Fanzine Reviews* best." Isn't it funny that your comments on the amateur 'zine field should interest a non-comic buyer! I suppose there's something about reading what the gods at Marvel think of our humble efforts.

To me, reading your 'zine reviews is extra interesting as I'm involved in 'zine production myself, and know or write to most of the people whose 'zines you comment on.

As I do read a lot of 'zines, I did notice several points which you have not so far covered, yet which have always bothered me about fanzine work. (I know my stuff isn't perfect, but I'm trying to improve). On strips: Some people try to be too clever with their stories and art layouts. They tend to fall over themselves in this sort of thing, as all this does is lose the reader. On articles: Too many people don't do enough research into what they've chosen to write about. Alan Moore talked about this in *Arkensword* 10. But then again, I suppose that's half of what fanzines are all about: people doing exactly what they want without interference.

By the way, Albert and I really enjoyed the *Marvel Work-in* at the Westminster Comic Mart. Albert didn't want to leave, but I persuaded him in the end. (Cheese is a great persuader!).

It was brill meeting all the people involved in putting together my favourite comics, even though Albert didn't much like his first meeting with *Captain Britain* (as drawn by Alan Davis). So here and now, he would like to get his own back...

All the best,
 John Jackson,
 Salford,
 Lancs.



MAD DOG NO 8

Available from Odd Mags, c/o Simon Maccock, 'The Office', 87 Oxford Ave, Southampton, SO2 0DN for £2.00 for a four-issue sub, including postage.

Mad Dog is the house journal of an organisation calling itself the *Mutant Reality Liberation Group*(!). It's a slick, well-printed stripazine containing 32 pages of brain-ripping text and startling hi-tech graphics. The artists and writers all share a fondness for a lurid serio-comic SF vocabulary and vernacular. Their work is of a uniformly high standard, and the stark reproduction does it full justice.

In a 'zine where everyone excels it is perhaps unfair to single out individuals, but I particularly like the work of Adam Warren, Chris Brasted and a mysterious entity known only as SMS. Brasted is arguably the most accomplished of the three; his work bears some resemblance to that of *Heavy Metal* brush-jockey Matt Howarth. He also has a loose but damned effective lettering technique (fan strips are notoriously weak in the lettering department; it is a very hard skill to master). His *Clonrunners* strip is good stuff indeed.

The editors claim that a £2.00 sub to *Mad Dog* "will bring hope to innumerable reality ghettoes," and personally I believe them. Two quid is a paltry sum to pay for four issues of a spectacular special effects-laden fanzine such as this. Go ahead — spend your money like there's no tomorrow (there isn't).

IMAGES, THE LEGEND OF THE HARLEQUIN AND ODYSSEY

Available from Rob Sharp, at 7 Cheltenham Road, Chorlton, Manchester, M21 1GL for 30p plus postage.

During his relatively short career as an amateur cartoonist, Rob Sharp has created a complex personal mythology in which Moorcockian (as, weird, fallible) heroes battle across weird worlds of mystery and wonder. His work appears regularly in such magazines as *Images*, *The Legend of the Harlequin* and *Gencomics*. Because he also edits and publishes these mags, Rob has carte blanche to exercise his writing and artistic skills.

Rob has synthesized a variety of influences from creative people whose work he admires, ranging from such authors as H.P. Lovecraft and Michael Moorcock, all the way through to the likes of comic artist Jack Kirby and arch-loony Richard Shaver, originator of the so-called "Shaver Mystery" (a bogus Hollow-Earth scenario). Rob is an intriguing myth-maker. His tales are set in a fantasy world where magic not only works but is a way of life. The artwork is thronged with weird imagery. There are always plenty of wicked villains on hand, together with lots of delicious heroines, exotic scenery, etc. The writing is



PANDORA: A distinctly unsettling battle of the sexes, by Howard Stangroom and Nigel Kitching, from MAD DOG no 8.

Fanzine Reviews

derivative but crisp and lively, full of lowbrow wit. What's more Rob sticks to a plot — occasionally overworked and threadbare, but a plot that's coherent and with a point. Elements of SF and supernatural horror prevail too. The end result is a little confusing (especially if you're a newcomer to the Sharp mythos) but kind of fun stuff.

The artwork is basically good but gets awfully sloppy at times. Rob has a good layout imagination but his figure drawing is often crude and hurried. His work might best be described as "amateurish but having potential". Pity he doesn't have more time to devote to each individual project.

The main appeal of Rob's work lies not so much in each individual story, but in the mammoth scope of the saga as a whole, which is certainly the most complex fanzine project of recent

years. It's really a super-epic made up of many sub chapters, all part of a master plot. Ambitious stuff! If you haven't discovered Rob's work yet, you'd better check it out pretty damned sharpish (!) before the whole series expands out of sight. Drop Rob a line (enclosing S.A.S.) and ask about his full range of mags. If you're a fan of amateur strips you won't be disappointed.

ASK FOR MAY, SETTLE FOR JUNE and IN SEARCH OF REAGAN'S BRAIN by Garry Trudeau, published by NEL at £1.95 each.

No true fan of cartoon art should need an introduction to the name of Garry Trudeau. His work on *Doonesbury* has established him as possibly the finest talent working in the syndicated strip

field. He's certainly among the ranks of America's cleverest satirists, and enjoys the unique distinction of having won a Pulitzer Prize for editorial cartooning. His work cuts like a scalpel through the surface skin of the American Dream, exposing the underlying reality for our inspection.

Doonesbury is a far-ranging strip. It uses Trudeau's now famous cast of characters to present a fragmented, many-sided view of modern America. Mike Doonesbury is the nominal 'star' of the show; his friends and associates make up the rest of the cast. The drug-addled Uncle Duke is perhaps Trudeau's finest creation — his dark odyssey of political intrigue and narcotic abuse has achieved a truly international dimension to the *Doonesbury* saga.

At the peak of its popularity the strip ran in some 740 newspapers worldwide, including the high-brow *Washington Post* and Britain's *Guardian*. Trudeau is presently taking a holiday from cartooning, but he promises to be back in the saddle by no later than October of this year. Till then, various reprint editions are keeping his work in the public here in Britain. NEL recently issued two paperback collections of Trudeau's more recent stuff: *Ask For May, Settle For June* and *In Search Of Reagan's Brain*. They both measure about 6" by 8" and contain a wealth of excellent material. All the hallmarks of Trudeau's style are in evidence: his disrespect for authority; his sense of outrage at what's going on in the world; his warmth and compassion; his flair for comic understatement, and so forth. The humour is subtle and deceptive — it sneaks up on you when you least expect it. The artwork is neat and functional, detailed but never cluttered. A good approximation of what the eye really sees.

Reagan's Brain contains some really fine comic interludes, including a *Fantastic Voyage*-type journey through the frayed nerve-endings of (what else?) Ronald Reagan's brain. It's a cheap shot maybe, but surprisingly overhanded. *Ask For May*, the better of the two books, features a sequence in which a chance remark by Uncle Duke triggers off the Iranian Hostage Crisis (remember the Iranian Hostage Crisis? It was in all the papers). It's all weird, sardonic stuff, done with skill, verve and imagination. Unmissable.

No one wears a cloak or a mask in these books, and no one gets punched in the face. There are no dramatic splash pages, no costumed sardar-villains — and no cliff-hanger endings. Trudeau isn't that kind of cartoonist. His work carried a different kind of impact — a resonance that lingers in the mind long afterwards. These books should be read by all fans of artful, sardonic wit — and read properly. A word to the wise guy...

Pete Scott



GIFTED YOU MAY BE, MICRONAUTS, BUT IN MY SCHEME OF THINGS YOU'RE STILL ONLY CHILDREN. YOUR PAST--ALL YOU BELIEVED IN, ALL YOU CHERISHED, ALL YOU WERE--IS NO MORE.

ARE YOU NOT PLEASED AND GRATEFUL--ARE YOU NOT EAGER TO BEGIN YOUR **NOBLY WORK?**

YES, MASTER--OH, YES!!

I'M SO GLAD.

YOU'LL SOON HAVE A CHANCE TO PROVE YOURSELVES. OTHERS HAVE BEEN DISPATCHED FROM EARTH TO OPPOSE ME. WE MUST SEE TO IT THEY GET THE WELCOME THEY DESERVE.

YOU WILL BECOME A FORCE THAT WILL RAVAGE FIRST YOUR OWN MICROVERSAL COSMOS--

--AND THEN THE **MACROVERSE ITSELF!**

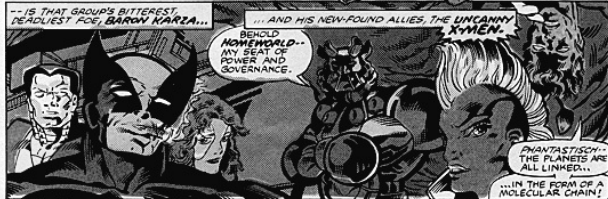
AND WITH A MERE THOUGHT OF THE ENTITY, THEY ARE TRANSFORMED INTO AN EVIL MOCKERY OF THOSE WHOM THEY GO TO DESTROY!



ELSEWHERE...

...THE BIOSHIP EMERGES FROM THE SPACEWALL THAT FORMS THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN MICRO- AND MACROVERSE.

ABOARD THIS SENTIENT, LIVING STARSHIP--IN PLACE OF ITS FELLOW MICRONAUTS--



--IS THAT GROUP'S BITTEREST, DEADLIEST Foe, **BARGO KARZA...**

...AND HIS NEW-FOUND ALLIES, THE **UNCANNY X-MEN.**

BEHOLD **HOMEWORLD**--MY SEAT OF POWER AND GOVERNANCE.

PHANTASTISCH--THE PLANETS ARE ALL LINKED...

...IN THE FORM OF A MOLECULAR CHAIN!

HOWEVER, AS THE BIOSHIP CLOSES ON ITS DESTINATION, AND IMAGES FROM THE PLANETARY SURFACE BEGIN APPEARING ON ITS EYEPORT TELESCREENS...

...NIGHTCRAWLER'S MOOD TURNS SOMBER.

YOURS DOES NOT SEEM THE MOST JOYFUL OF HOMES, HERR BACHN.

THERE WAS A REBELLION AGAINST MY LAWFUL AUTHORITY, X-MAN!

"I AM MERELY TAKING STEPS--AS ANY RULER WOULD--TO SUPPRESS SUCH ACTIVITIES..."

"...AND ENSURE THEY DO NOT REOCCUR."

THAT AIN'T QUITE THE WAY BIOSHIP TELLS IT, BUB. HE SAYS YOU'RE THE USURPER, WHO SLAUGHTERED HOMEWORLD'S RIGHTFUL RULERS AND SET YOURSELF UP AS ITS TINPOT DICTATOR.

THAT ACCUSATION IS HARDLY SURPRISING, WOLVERINE, SINCE THIS VESSEL IS ONE OF THOSE REBELS I REFERRED TO!

DO YOU DENY THEM, KARZA?

DOES IT MATTER, STORM?

MAYBE WE'RE PICKY ABOUT WHOSE BUTT WE PULL OUTTA THE FIRE, Y'KNOW?

I AM NOT OVERJOYED BY YOUR PRESENCE EITHER, LITTLE MAN.

ONE OF THE BURDENS OF LEADERSHIP, X-MEN, IS THAT YOU MUST OCCASIONALLY JOIN WITH THE DEVIL TO DEFEAT A COMMON FOE. IF YOU DENY ME AID, IT IS NOT I WHO WILL SUFFER, BUT THE COUNTLESS INHABITANTS OF THE MICROVERSE.

THE ENTITY TAKES NO PRISONERS. CAN YOU LEAVE MY PEOPLE TO SUCH A FATE?

HE TRULY DOES NOT CARE--AND CARES LESS IF WE KNOW IT.

HE'S RIGHT, THOUGH, COLOSSUS.

PERHAPS-- BUT IS LIFE UNDER KARZA'S RULE REALLY ANY BETTER?

THAT DEPENDS, I GUESS, ON HOW BADLY A PERSON WANTS TO LIVE!

THIS BEHEMOTH IS NOT THE SIMPLETON HE FIRST APPEARS!

WE GAVE OUR WORD, KARZA. THE X-MEN WILL NOT BE FORSWORN.

HOW NOBLE. THOSE LIVES MATTER NOT A WHIT TO ME.

NONE OF THE X-MEN HAVE YET REALIZED THAT I AM NOT THEIR COMPANION, KITTY PRYDE-- BUT BARON KARZA, TRAPPED IN HER BODY, AS SHE IS IN MINE. AT PRESENT IT SUITS MY PURPOSES THAT THEY DO NOT LEARN.

FORTUNATELY, MY MENTAL POWERS ARE UNIMPAIRED BY THIS TRANSITION. I STILL HAVE COMPLETE CONTROL OVER MY BODY. THE GIRL CANNOT BETRAY ME.

WHY SHOULD WE TRUST YOU?

WHAT CHOICE HAVE YOU?

WE ARE ALLIES, X-MEN-- FOR THE TERM OF THAT ALLIANCE I PLEDGE NEITHER BETRAYAL NOR DECEPTION. IF THAT DOES NOT SATISFY YOU, PUT YOUR FAITH IN THIS ROBOD VESSEL.

HIS LOYALTY TO ARCTURUS RANN IS ABSOLUTE.

KARZA IS LYING-- ABOUT SOMETHING-- BUT HIS WORDS CONTAIN JUST ENOUGH TRUTH TO MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE TO TELL WHERE.

SO WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE, SUB?

*SEE LAST ISH-- Bobb

THE ENTITY CONTROLS THE FRINGE-WORLDS, NEAREST THE SPACEWALL--HE EVIDENTLY DRAWS HIS POWER FROM EARTH, THOUGH BIDSHIP AND I WERE UNABLE TO PINPOINT THE SOURCE.

THE ENTITY IS A MOST FORMIDABLE FOE. MY STARFLEET--LED BY THE MICRONAUTS--WAS WIPE OUT BY HIM. THE MICRONAUTS CAPTURED, AND WITH A SNAP OF HIS FINGERS, THE ENTITY COLLETERATED AN ENTIRE PLANET

YOU SUGGESTIN' WE FOLLOW IN THEIR FOOTSTEPS?



SUCH A BATTLE IS NO PLACE FOR A CHILD. PERHAPS IT WOULD BE BETTER TO LEAVE KITTY PRYDE WITH ME.

HE HAS A POINT, STORM. I... I AM KINDA SCARED.

THE X-MAN WHO FACED BROOD, MORLOCKS AND EVEN DARK PHOENIX WITHOUT FLINCHING? I FIND THAT HARD TO BELIEVE.

WE LOOK AFTER OUR OWN, BARON. KITTY STAYS WITH US.



AS BODSHIP WARPS OUT OF
THE HOMEWORLD SYSTEM...

KARZA'S TELEPORT BEAM
DEPOSITS HIS BODY NOW
INHABITED BY KITTY
RADE'S MIND, IN THE
NOBODY'S BODY BANKS--
OVERSEEN BY HIS CHIEF
SCIENTIST AND MINISTER,
DE GRAYDE.

NO!!

THIS CAN'T BE
HAPPENING! I'M A
PRISONER IN THIS
STUPID SUIT OF ARMOR,
IN KARZA'S BODY! I
CAN HEAR, SEE, THINK--
BUT I CAN'T MOVE OR
COMMUNICATE EXCEPT
AT KARZA'S
DIRECTION!

I'VE BEEN
TRYING TO BREAK
FREE, TO GAIN
CONTROL, BUT HIS
WILL AND PSI-POWERS
ARE TOO STRONG. I
DON'T HAVE THE
SKILL OR KNOWLEDGE
TO COMPENSATE.

WHERE AM I
ANYWAY? WHAT IS
THIS PLACE?

MY LORD?

HOW FARES
YOUR STRUGGLE
WITH THE
ENTITY?

NO ANSWER??
IS SOMETHING
WRONG?

OR SHOULD I SAY, FANTASTICALLY
RIGHT-- FOR ME!

UH-OH. I DON'T LIKE
THE WAY THIS CREEP
IS LOOKING AT ME--

IF MY
SUSPICIONS
ARE CORRECT--AND
THE ARMOR IS NOW
MERELY AN INANIMATE
SHELL--THEN THE
MOMENT OF DE GRAYDE'S
TRIUMPH IS AT
HAND!

JUST WHAT I NEED,
PALACE INTRIGUE.

AT LAST, DE GRAYDE,
YOU REVEAL YOUR
TRUE SELF--YOUR
TRAITOROUS
AMBITIONS--TO ME!

MASTER!

A HOLOGRAPHIC
ASTRA
PROJECTION!

FORGIVE ME,
BARON--HAVE MERCY!

SILENCE, LACKEY!

YOU WILL TREAT
MY ARMOUR AS YOU
WOULD ME. THE
SLIGHTEST DIS-
RESPECT--MUCH
LESS OUTRIGHT
TREACHERY--AND
YOU WILL
REGRET IT.

RESTORE THE
BODY BANKS TO
FULL OPERATIONAL
CAPABILITY. CREATE
FOR ME AN ARMY OF
DOG SOLDIERS THE
LIKE OF WHICH OUR
COGNOS HAS NEVER
SEEN. IF I MUST
SACRIFICE EVERY
INHABITANT OF THE
MICROVERSE IN ORDER
TO CRUSH THE ENTITY,
DE GRAYDE, THEN
BY DALLAN
AND SEP'SIS --

I SHALL!!

MEANWHILE...

WE ARE NEARING
OUR DESTINATION,
X-MEN.

HOW DO
YOU KNOW,
GOSADON?
BIOSHIP?

I AM TELEPATHICALLY LINKED
WITH COMMANDER ARCTURUS RANN,
LEADER OF THE MICRONAUTS.

THAT BOND WAS BROKEN WHEN KARZA AND I FLED TO EARTH AFTER
OUR INITIAL DEFEAT-- BUT SINCE RETURNING, COLOSSUS, I'VE SENSED
HIM ONCE MORE. I CAN'T RECEIVE ANY SPECIFIC THOUGHTS-- THERE'S
TOO MUCH PSYCHIC INTERFERENCE, PROBABLY GENERATED BY THE
ENTITY-- BUT THE LINK DOES ENABLE ME TO HOME IN ON COMMANDER
RANN'S LOCATION.

STORM KEEPS STARING AT ME,
DOES THE WITCH SUSPECT?!

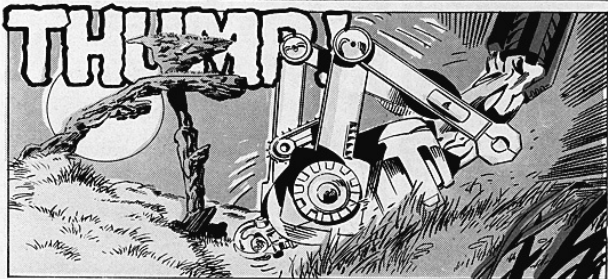
WHY WAS KARZA SO CONCERNED
ABOUT KITTY? IT WAS VERY
OUT OF CHARACTER. I WISH
ONE OF US WERE A PROPER
TELEPATH, SO WE COULD
KNOW HER MIND AS WELL
AS HIS.

BIOSHIP, IS YOUR
PSILINK RECIPROCAL?

YOU MEAN, IS THE
COMMANDER
AWARE OF ME
AND MY THOUGHTS?
OF COURSE!

BRACE FOR LANDING,
PLEASE, X-MEN.

WE'VE ARRIVED.





THEY SAY, MY FRIENDS, THAT ANY LANDING YOU WALK AWAY FROM IS A GOOD ONE.

THAT IDIOT SHIP SURE PICKED A HECKLVA TIME TA PROVE IT.

EVERYONE OKAY?

BUMPS AND AND BRUISES MEIN RELAND NOTHING MORE.

CAN YOU SENSE THE MICRONAUTS, SHIP OR THE ENTITY?



"SHIP?!"
BIOSHIP?!"
NIGHTCRAWLER, CHECK ITS SYSTEMS!

MINUTES LATER...

NOTHING FUNCTIONS, STORM. THE VESSEL IS COMPLETELY INERT. THE ROBBID EQUIVALENT, I'D SAY, OF BEING IN A COMA.

YOU DON'T LOOK SURPRISED, DARLIN'.



RANN IS A PRISONER. SOMEHOW, THE ENTITY USED THE MIND-LINK TO LURE BIOSHIP--AND US-- INTO HIS CLUTCHES. FOR ALL WE KNOW, HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN CONTROLLING--OR AT LEAST INFLUENCING-- THE SHIP FROM THE MOMENT WE ENTERED THE MICROVERSE--

LORDS OF EARTH AND AIR!



X-MEN, COME SEE WHAT I HAVE FOUND!

INCREDIBLE--IT'S AS IF WE'RE SIX INCHES TALL.

'RORO, CRAZY AS IT SOUNDS, THIS IS OUR LAWN.

YOU MEAN, A FACSIMILE SO PERFECT IT FOOLS EVEN YOUR ENHANCED SENSES?

YUP.

I WOULD NOT HAVE IMAGINED SUCH A DECEPTION POSSIBLE.

ME NEITHER.

BUT WHY GO TO SO MUCH TROUBLE...?

KITTY, PHASE THROUGH THE DOOR AND RECONNOITER.

STORM, I...

I DON'T KNOW HOW TO PROPERLY USE THE BEAST ABILITY-- BUT SAYING SO WILL REVEAL MY DECEPTION!

LET ME PROVIDE OUR ENTRANCE, STORM!

SO MUCH FOR SUBTLETY.



HMPH--INSIDE SIGHTS 'N' SMELLS'RE AS CORRECT AS THE ONES ON THE LAWN.

PERHAPS THE MANSION WAS SHRUNK AND TRANSPORTED TO THE MICROVERSE AS WELL?



FASCINATING CONCEPT, COLOSSUS. BUT, WOLVERINE, DO YOU NOT FEEL A SENSE OF WRONGNESS ABOUT THIS PLACE...?



ACTUALLY, NIGHT-CRAWLER...

...A MORE APPROPRIATE DESCRIPTION...

...WOULD BE "FEELING OF EVIL."

WELCOME ALL, TO PROFESSOR XAVIER'S ALTERNATE SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS.

AS YOU X-MEN INHERITED THE MANTLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF YOUR PREDECESSORS, THE ORIGINAL TEAM OF MUTANTS...

...SO HAVE I GATHERED THESE WORTHIES TO SERVE AS YOUR REPLACEMENTS.

IS THAT PROFESSOR XAVIER?

STORM, THOSE BESIDE HIM ARE THE MICRONAUTS!

HOW PERCEPTIVE, NIGHTCRAWLER, BUT NOW THE TABLES HAVE BEEN REVERSED.

WITH THESE X-MEN-- ONCE I'VE BROKEN YOUR SPIRITS AS I DID THE MICRONAUTS-- I SHALL PLAY SUCH A GAME...

...AS WILL SHAKE THE UNIVERSE TO ITS FOUNDATIONS!

SCATTER, X-MEN!

SWAPP!

BAMF

WOLVERINE--TAKE CARE! THE MICRONAUTS ARE ENLARGED--THEY CANNOT HELP THEMSELVES!



I AIN'T GOT MUCH CHOICE, PETEY. YOU RATHER I LET THE CREEP SQUASH YOU?!

WOLVERINE'S RETRACTABLE CLAWS ARE ADAMANTIUM--THE STRONGEST METAL KNOWN--BUT THEY'RE SO SMALL NOW, THEY DO HUNTAR LITTLE HARM.

ONLY THE FACT...



THAT WOLVERINE'S BONES ARE LACED WITH THAT MIRACLE METAL--

--MAKING THEM VIRTUALLY UNBREAKABLE--SAVES HIM FROM CERTAIN DEATH AT THE HANDS OF BUG'S ROCKET LANCE.

TOO LATE, NIGHTCRAWLER TELE-PORTS TO HIS COMPANIONS' AID.

PROFESSOR XAVIER IS A TELEPATH, STORM! HE'LL KNOW OUR EVERY MOVE THE INSTANT WE THINK OF IT!



I SENSE NO MIND-TOUCH, KURT.

AND THE MICRONAUTS ARE RESPONDING TOO SLOWLY. THEY SEEM FAMILIAR WITH OUR TACTICS...

BUT NOT OUR SPECIFIC MOVES.



STORM'S PURVIEW IS THE WEATHER, IN ALL ITS MYRIAD ASPECTS. SHE USES LIGHTNING TO DEAL WITH MARIONETTE.

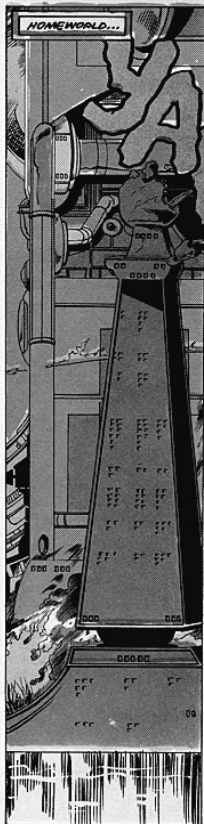
BUT WHAT MANNER OF BEING IN THIS COSMOS--OR OUR OWN--KNOWS US SO WELL TO MIMIC OUR REALITY SO PERFECTLY?



A PITY, ALIEN, YOU WILL NOT SURVIVE TO LEARN.







BARON KARZA
--YOUR SCREAM
--WHAT HAS
HAPPENED WHAT
DOES IT MEAN?
IS... IS THERE
ANYTHING I
CAN DO?!!

YOUR
SOLICITUDE
IS TOUCHING
DEGRAYDE.



I DID
NOT KNOW
YOU CARED.

BUT, TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTION...

...MY MIND-- THIS
ARMORED BODY--
IS ONCE MORE MY
OWN!



I AM FREE--
TO SPEAK, TO MOVE
AND AT LAST, MOST
IMPORTANTLY...

TO
ACT!!

TO BE CONTINUED!!



SPIDER-MAN

No 590

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Then, in this same issue, we're giving away 10 videos of *The Twilight Zone* and 10 videos of *Never Say Never Again*. These Warner Home Video Cassettes are "Rental Only" in the shops, but you can win your own copy only through **STARBURST**. All this plus the most complete coverage of Fantasy films in the country, making **STARBURST** - the Fantasy Filmgoers' Companion.



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